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Lewis and Clark and the Indian Country: The Native American Perspective

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kwaki History will serve not only as a standard, authoritative resource on the tribe but also as a model for collaborative historical documentation projects. National recognition of this achievement already has come through the American Association for State and Local History's naming of the State Historical Society of Iowa and the Meskwaki Nation Historical Preservation Office as recipients of its 2007 Award of Merit for Leadership in History. Buy this CD and use it.

Lewis and Clark and the Indian Country: The Native American Perspective, edited by Frederick E. Hoxie and Jay T. Nelson. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2007. vi, 366 pp. Maps, illustrations, notes, references, index. \$70.00 cloth, \$24.95 paper.

Reviewer John P. Bowes is assistant professor of history at Eastern Kentucky University. He is the author of *Black Hawk and the War of 1832: Removal in the North* (2007) and *Exiles and Pioneers: Eastern Indians in the Trans-Mississippi West* (2007).

This book is clearly not the first to discuss the Lewis and Clark expedition. Nor is it the first to examine the Corps of Discovery from a Native perspective. However, *Lewis and Clark and the Indian Country* makes a strong case for being the first to present a comprehensive analysis of the expedition and its impact from the time prior to the expedition to the present day. And although it is principally a collection of primary source documents, it presents a complex and critical perspective on Lewis and Clark that provides thoughtful conclusions even as it leaves room for readers to make inferences of their own.

Lewis and Clark and the Indian Country is an edited volume that contains a vast array of sources, many of which come from a Newberry Library exhibit showcasing new scholarship on the expedition and Indian Country. Excerpts from the Corps of Discovery journals appear next to previously published essays, interviews with Native peoples, and government documents. All of this is put together with a stated purpose of tackling head-on the legend constructed over the course of two centuries—the legend of Lewis and Clark and their courageous expedition successfully overcoming both wilderness and hostile Native tribes to open the West to their fellow Americans. In collaboration with five Native consultants, Fred Hoxie and Jay Nelson have put together a volume that pointedly illustrates the ways in which the Lewis and Clark expedition was not such a singular event but a “part of a historical process that was ongoing and whose effects could be witnessed” in present-day Indian Country (11).

The collection is organized into four distinct sections. The first of these, titled "The Indian Country," presents the histories and cultures of the people and places prior to the arrival of the Corps of Discovery. "Crossing the Indian Country" introduces readers to multiple aspects of the actual expedition. Most of the sources in this segment focus on the relations between the American explorers and the Native peoples they encountered; accounts written by Meriwether Lewis and William Clark share space with the perspectives of Hidatsa, Nez Perce, and Blackfeet Indians. This section provides intriguing insights into the expedition but might appear fragmented to anyone not already familiar with the basics of the Lewis and Clark expedition. The second half of the book examines the impact of the expedition on the land and the peoples along the route in the decades and centuries that followed. "A New Nation Comes to the Indian Country" traces the effects of settlers, ranchers, miners, and government policy during the nineteenth century as the United States and its citizens sought to impose its will and beliefs on the land. Finally, the section titled "Indian Country Today" addresses the various ways the descendants of the Native peoples who met and helped Lewis and Clark have worked to maintain and recover their land, languages, and livelihood in the face of an American nation intent on celebrating Lewis and Clark as the great explorers who discovered the American West.

This collection presents a vast amount of information that is not easily digested the first time through its pages. That is as it should be. In an introduction that begins by analyzing Americans' love for bicentennials, Frederick Hoxie notes that "the greater the celebration, the smaller the questions being asked about it" (5). Needless to say, Hoxie and Jay Nelson have done a great service by moving far beyond the simple questions of the Lewis and Clark expedition. Page by page, readers encounter accounts and information that are diverse and at times unfamiliar, but they are not told what to think of them. Indeed, the conclusion written by renowned Lewis and Clark scholar James P. Ronda presents more questions to consider than conclusions to accept.

Lewis and Clark and the Indian Country ultimately delivers on the promise of the introduction. It places the Corps of Discovery and its leaders in "a broad and multifaceted historical context that will allow serious students of history the opportunity to reflect on the deeper meaning of the expedition" (7). Most important, it provides readers with a vast amount of information with which they can assess all that has been written, said, and celebrated about the Corps of Discovery and the Indian men and women who played such vital roles in the expedition and live with its legacy.